



US006053929A

# United States Patent

[19] **Cohn et al.**

[11] **Patent Number:** **6,053,929**  
 [45] **Date of Patent:** **\*Apr. 25, 2000**

[54] **SURGICAL SCALPEL**

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[\*] Notice: This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

[21] Appl. No.: **09/273,677**

[22] Filed: **Mar. 22, 1999**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

[63] Continuation-in-part of application No. 09/052,588, Mar. 3, 1998, Pat. No. 5,938,676, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 08/666,734, Jun. 18, 1996, Pat. No. 5,938,675, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 08/376,065, Jan. 20, 1995, Pat. No. 5,527,329, which is a continuation of application No. 08/163,938, Dec. 8, 1993, abandoned.

[51] **Int. Cl.<sup>7</sup>** ..... **A61B 17/32**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **606/167; 30/2; 30/151; 30/335**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 606/166, 167, 606/170, 172, 181, 182, 185; 30/2, 151, 162, 164, 167, 286, 335

[56] **References Cited****U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A surgical scalpel includes an elongate handle defining a longitudinal axis and having a proximal end and a distal end. The scalpel has a cartridge removably mounted to the handle that has a blade holder with a proximal end and a distal end. There is a blade fixedly attached to blade holder disposed so that the blade projects distally outwardly when the cartridge is mounted on the handle. The cartridge also has a shield with a proximal end, a distal end and a bottom mounted onto the blade holder. The shield is slidably movable between a distal position where the shield substantially prevents inadvertent access to the blade and a proximal position where the shield substantially surrounds a portion of the handle and the blade is exposed for use. The cartridge is releasably mountable to the handle and has elements for substantially preventing movement of the shield with respect to the blade holder unless the cartridge is mounted on the handle. The cartridge further including elements for substantially preventing an inadvertent movement of the shield to the proximal position thereby to expose the blade as the cartridge is being mounted to the handle.

**29 Claims, 44 Drawing Sheets**

